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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT
Reforms of Technical Education.

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1. The general improvement of the current conditions in Poland is also noticeable in the field of technical education, and in particular of high technical studies. The changes introduced there in earlier post-World War II years had provoked much justified criticism in academic and professional circles [in Poland] and had been considered as partly responsible for the lowering of the standards of technical preparation of the graduates. Fortunately, the time now is propitious for correcting at least some of the ill-judged reforms.

2. The most important improvement at present is the abolition of the dual system of high technical studies. The previous system of technical high schools, introduced after the war by the Communist regime, established two degrees of such studies: one lasting usually three years, and giving to the graduates at least a formal qualification for taking employment in industry; and the higher degree for more ablestudents, enabling further specialization and intended as a training ground for scientific workers.

3. This organization was introduced against the advice of academic teaching staffs and was later frequently criticized not only by professors, but also by leading representatives of industries because in consequence of it the universities, for a number of years, produced masses of young "engineers" with insufficient educational standard for coping with the problems of modern technique. The real reason behind such a system was the urgent need of producing new qualified engineers at the speediest possible rate, to meet the enormous demand of industrialization. This has undoubtedly been achieved, but the total result is far from satisfactory. There are great shortcomings in many branches of industry, which are due - according to most responsible opinions often expressed at industrial conferences and in the technical press - to the inadequate standards of the newly produced engineers.

4. Now in 1956, a new system is being put into effect, starting from the first two years of studies. This system is described officially as "unification of studies" (Studia Jednolite), and in practice means that the total period of studies at all technical high schools cannot be shorter than five years for every pupil; that the duality of academic degrees is abolished, and that all graduates shall leave school with the uniform academic title of "Magister (Master) - Engineer".

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5. Another problem, also of great importance, is in the new program of studies: i.e. that the actual studies should be more closely connected with practical experience. This also was often raised at various high-level technical conferences: professors as well as industrial managers frequently pointed out that graduates of high schools came to their first jobs in factories without any - or scarcely any - knowledge of the practical work, possessing only a general theoretical preparation. Such a state of affairs could also be explained by the shortness of studies: during the period of three years, all that a high school could do, was to give to its student a theoretical basis for his job. Now this is to be amended and greater opportunities for practical work are to be arranged for the students, partly by developing school workshops and laboratories, partly by the cooperation of the schools with the local industries.

6. There still remains one great difficulty with which high technical schools have to cope, namely the constant shortages of the teaching staffs. The production of scientific cadres is still insufficient to cover all the needs, in view of the existence - apart from the high schools - of the great and growing number of scientific institutes, working upon various problems of modern industry. Furthermore, the conditions which a high school may offer are not tempting to the most energetic and ablest adepts of technical science who find much better conditions of work and pay in the industry. Many young and promising scientists leave their jobs with universities to seek better employment elsewhere, and this outflux of high-standard personnel is a cause of great worry to the academic circles.

7. To make this situation quite clear, it is sufficient to quote official data concerning the conditions of pay of high-school personnel which were published by the monthly "Zycie Szkoly Wyzszej" (Life of the High School) No 3, 1956.

8. The figures given below are those of the basic pay, before any deductions have been made for taxes, etc, granted to various degrees of high-school teachers in the years 1954 and 1955:

Profesor Zwyczajny	(Professor ordinary)	3,100	zlotys monthly
Profesor Nadzwyczajny	(Professor extraordinary)	2,600	" "
Docent		2,100	" "
Za-Stepca Profesora	(Deputy professor)	1,800	" "
Adjunkt		1,300	" "
Starszy Asystent	(Senior assistant)	1,100	" "
Asystent	(Assistant)	920	" "
Zastepca Asystenta	(Deputy assistant)	640	" "

9. These rates of salaries, especially on junior teaching levels, show clearly that one has indeed to possess an all-consuming zeal for scientific and teaching work to resign oneself to such conditions of living. One of the results is, that academic teachers, especially those of junior grades are obliged to seek all sorts of extra jobs in order to supplement their earnings, and this in turn prevents their concentration on the main job and impedes their scientific development. The above-mentioned monthly stresses that the salary of a senior assistant, according to official schedules, equals exactly 102% of the "average nominal monthly pay in Poland", which in view of the qualifications and experience expected from him is obviously unfair.

10. At the end of the academic year 1954-55, around 23 young men and women completed their studies at high schools and universities, including technical, agricultural

and economic faculties.

11. As a result Poland has gained about 12 thousand technicians with higher education, with the degrees either of "engineers" or "magister-engineers" (still in accordance with the new system established after the war and now being changed), who have since passed to various jobs in Polish industry.

12. In the same year 1954-55, vocational (trade and industrial) schools in Poland were training 430,144 pupils. The great progress in this respect is best appreciated if one compares this information with the statistics of the year 1937/38; in that time, there were in Poland only 194,872 pupils of vocational schools.

13. Actual data concerning vocational schools of special character are as follows (always for the school year 1954/55):

a. Vocational schools for adults (usually evening schools for people actually employed to give them opportunities of improving their qualifications) - trained 14,039 people in various branches of industry and trade.

b. In 42 special technical schools (Technikum) established for training workers selected on account of their talents (so-called "Robotnicy Wysunieci"), and being an example of the policy of the so-called "social advancement", there were 5,260 pupils.

c. In special schools for industrial foremen (Szkola Majstrow) of which there are 11 in Poland, 316 people were being trained.

14. As to the state of higher technical education: according to official Polish data, Poland possesses at present:

a. 21 Polytechnic Schools and High Schools for Engineers

b. Six High Schools of Agriculture

15. This represents a considerable development of technical education, since the corresponding data with regard to other branches of higher studies are as follows:

a. Eight universities (here it must be remembered that some faculties have been permanently separated from the previous organization of universities and set up as independent schools)

b. Nine high schools of economics

c. Six high schools of pedagogics

d. Ten Academies of Medicine

e. 17 higher schools of arts.

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